

which are written on parchment in very small characters,

and are enclosed in, cases of silver or leather.

At night they merely take off the outer garment

where they have two. The scanty ablutions are very

curious. Each family possesses a metal jug of rather

graceful form, with a long spout curiously curved, and

the mode of washing, which points to an accustomed

scarcity of water, is to pour a little into the palm of the

right hand, and bathe the face, arms, and hands with it,

soap not being used. They conclude by rinsing the

mouth and rubbing the teeth either with the forefinger

or with the aromatic leaf of a small pink salvia.

I called by appointment on the Khan's wives, sixteen

in number. An ordinary tribesman marries as many

wives as he can afford to house and keep. Poverty and

monogamy are not allied here. "Women do nearly all the

work, large flocks create much female employment, and

as it is " contrary to Bakhtiari custom " to employ female

servants who are not wives, polygamy is very largely

practised. On questioning the guides, who are usually

very poor men, I find that they have two, three, and

even four wives, the reverse of what is customary among

the peasants of Turkey and Persia proper. The influence

of a chief increases with the number of his wives,

as it enlarges his own family connections, and those

made by the marriages of his many sons and daughters.

Large families are the rule. Six children is the average

in a monogamous household, and the rate  
of infant  
mortality is very low.

The " fort" is really picturesque, though  
forlorn and  
dirty. It is built on the steep slope of a hill,  
and on one  
side is three stories in height. It has a long  
gallery in  
front, with fretwork above the posts which  
support the  
roof, round towers at two of the corners,  
and many  
irregular roofs, and steep zigzags cut in the  
rock lead up